

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for total consideration given the present application. Claims 1-26 were pending prior to the Office Action. Claims 12, 13, and 15 have been canceled and claims 1, 6, 7, 14, and 18-20 have been amended through this Reply. Therefore, claims 1-11, 13, 14, 16-26 are currently pending of which claims 1, 6, and 14 are independent. Applicants appreciate that the previous arguments filed on August 10, 2007 were found persuasive. However, claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, and 14 now stand rejected under a new ground(s) of rejection. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejected claims in light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, and earnestly seek timely allowance of all pending claims.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants appreciate that claims 4, 5, 8-10, 12, 13, 15-17, and 21-26 are indicated to define allowable subject matter.

CLAIM OBJECTION

Claim 7 is objected to for a minor informality. This claim has been amended through this Reply to address this issue. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested to withdraw this objection.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd PARAGRAPH

Claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. These claims have been amended through this Reply to address this issue. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 6, 11, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Parulski et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,402,170)[hereinafter "Parulski"]. Claims 2 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Parulski in

view of Akazuka (Japanese Publication No. 62-252583)[hereinafter "Akazuka"]. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Parulski in view of Mizoguchi (U.S. Patent No. 6,407,772)[hereinafter "Mizoguchi"]. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 14 have been amended to include the allowable subject-matter of claims 12 and 15, respectively. Further, independent claim 6 has been amended to include the subject-matter of claim 13. As acknowledged by the Examiner, none of the applied prior references, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggest the subject-matter of claim 13. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 6 is allowable over Parulski.

Accordingly, it is submitted that independent claims 1, 6, and 14 are allowable over the applied prior art references. Claims 2, 3, 7, and 11 are at least allowable by virtue of their dependency on corresponding allowable independent claim.

Conclusion


In view of the above remarks, it is believed that all pending claims are allowable.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Ali M. Imam Reg. No. 58,755 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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